

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2017

**Remarks Prior to a Security Briefing and an Exchange With Reporters in
Bedminster, New Jersey**

August 10, 2017

The President. Hello, everybody. We're having some meetings. I know you're going to be watching a couple of them. We have a lot of people here today, a lot of subjects under discussion, including Venezuela; including, of course, North Korea; and other things. And I think we're making tremendous headway.

We'll be spending quite a bit of time here, and then we—during the weekend, as you know—toward the end, we're going to Manhattan where I have a lot of meetings scheduled in Manhattan.

Any questions?

North Korea

Q. Mr. President, the North Koreans said yesterday that your statement on Tuesday was "nonsense"—that's the word that they used. Do you have any response to that?

The President. Well, I don't think they mean that, and I think they—it's the first time they've heard it like they heard it. And frankly, the people that were questioning that statement, "Was it too tough?"—maybe it wasn't tough enough. They've been doing this to our country for a long time, for many years. And it's about time that somebody stuck up for the people of this country and for the people of other countries.

So, if anything, maybe that statement wasn't tough enough, and we're backed by a hundred percent by our military. We're backed by everybody, and we're backed by many other leaders. And I noticed that many Senators and others today came out very much in favor of what I said. But, if anything, that statement may not be tough enough.

Q. What would be tougher than "fire and fury"?

The President. Well, you'll see. You'll see.

Q. Mr. President, is one of the options being considered a preemptive strike or first strike——

The President. We don't talk about that. I never do. I'm not like the other administration that would say we're going into Mosul in 4 months. I don't talk about it.

Q. Mr. President——

The President. We'll see what happens. But I can tell you that what they've been doing and what they've been getting away with is a tragedy, and it can't be allowed.

Diplomatic Efforts With North Korea

Q. Mr. President, would you ever consider negotiations under different circumstances?

The President. Sure. We'll always consider negotiations, but they've been negotiating now for 25 years. Look at Clinton. He folded on the negotiations. He was weak and ineffective. You look what happened with Bush; you look what happened with Obama. Obama, he didn't even want to talk about it. But I talk. It's about time. Somebody has to do it. Somebody has to do it.

Senate Majority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell/Health Care Reform Legislation/The President's Legislative Agenda

Q. Mr. President, can you talk about your relationship with Senator McConnell?

The President. I just want him to get repeal and replace done. I've been hearing repeal and replace now for 7 years, but I've only been doing this for 2 years. And I've really only been doing this for 6 months. But I've been running, so now it's almost 2 years. And I—all I hear is repeal and replace, and then I get there, and I said: "Where is the bill? I want to sign it." First day, and they don't have it.

And they passed repeal and replace, but they never had a President, frankly, or a Senate that was going to do it. But they never have had a President, so it didn't matter. So I say very simply: Where is repeal and replace? Now I want tax reform and tax cuts. We're going to reduce taxes for the people. We pay more tax than anybody in the world, and we're going to reduce taxes.

So I say tax cuts, tax reform, and I want a very big infrastructure bill, where we're working on that very hard already, and we can do that. And we may even get bipartisan on infrastructure, but we want to have it.

But I said, "Mitch, get to work, and let's get it done." They should have had this last one done. They lost by one vote. For a thing like that to happen is a disgrace, and frankly, it shouldn't have happened. That I can tell you.

Senate Majority Leader A. Mitchell McConnell

Q. Should Senator McConnell consider stepping down as Majority Leader? There's some conservative analysts, including Sean Hannity, who say it's time for him to retire.

The President. Well, I'll tell you what: If he doesn't get repeal and replace done, if he doesn't get taxes done—meaning cuts and reform—and if he doesn't get a very easy one to get done, infrastructure—if he doesn't get them done, then you can ask me that question.

Q. So what is that, a yes or a no?

The President. You can ask me the—that means ask me that question. Let's hope he gets it done.

Opioid Crisis

Q. Mr. President, is the opioid crisis an emergency? And if so, why haven't you declared it one?

The President. The opioid crisis is an emergency, and I'm saying officially right now: It is an emergency. It's a national emergency. We're going to spend a lot of time, a lot effort, and a lot of money on the opioid crisis.

Q. But do you need emergency powers to address it?

The President. We're going to draw it up, and we're going to make it a national emergency. It is a serious problem, the likes of which we have never had. You know, when I was growing up they had the LSD, and they had certain generations of drugs. There's never been anything like what's happened to this country over the last 4 or 5 years.

And I have to say this, in all fairness, this is a worldwide problem not just a United States problem. This is happening worldwide. But this is a national emergency, and we are drawing documents now to so attest.

North Korea

Q. Mr. President, there's been some mixed messages coming out of your administration on North Korea. Secretary Tillerson seemed to advocate for diplomacy. Secretary Mattis seemed to advocate for more——

The President. There are no mixed messages. There are no mixed messages. I heard—I mean, to be honest, General Mattis may have taken it a step beyond what I said. There are no mixed messages. And Rex was just stating the views—look, here's the view. I said it yesterday. I don't have to say it again. And I'll tell you this: It may be tougher than I said it, not less. It may very well be tougher than I said it. Okay?

How about one more?

North Korea/China/Russia

Q. Can you offer any assurance to the American people who are understandably anxious about the situation with North Korea? They see images of these missiles coming up in the air, the threats to Guam, they see your statement about "fire and fury." Should they be comfortable that you have this under control?

The President. The people of this country should be very comfortable. And I will tell you this: If North Korea does anything in terms of even thinking about attack of anybody that we love or we represent or our allies or us, they can be very, very nervous—I'll tell you what—and they should be very nervous. Because things will happen to them like they never thought possible. Okay?

He's been pushing the world around for a long time. And I have great respect for what China and what Russia did and those 15—we got a 15-to-nothing vote. I have great respect for China and Russia, what they did on sanctions. I believe that will have an effect. I don't think it will have the kind of effect—even though I was the one—we were the ones that got it. And Nikki Haley did a great job. We all did a great job. But I have great respect for what they did; I have great respect for the 15 to nothing, but probably, it will not be as effective as a lot of people think it can be, unfortunately.

China/North Korea

Q. Can China do more?

The President. I think China can do a lot more, yes. China can. And I think China will do a lot more. Look, we have trade with China. We lose hundreds of billions of dollars a year on trade with China. They know how I feel. It's not going to continue like that. But if China helps us, I feel a lot differently toward trade. A lot differently toward trade.

So we will do, I think—the people of our country are safe; our allies are safe. And I will tell you this: North Korea better get their act together, or they're going to be in trouble like few nations ever have been in trouble in this world. Okay?

Thank you very much. We're going down to the other side, and we will—we're going to take a few more questions. Okay? Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. at the Trump National Golf Club Bedminster. In his remarks, he referred to former Presidents William J. Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama; Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson; Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis; Chairman of the Korean Worker's Party Kim Jong Un of North Korea; and U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Nikki R. Haley. A reporter referred to Sean Hannity, anchor, Fox News' "Hannity" program.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Bedminster, NJ :: Security briefing; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: Bedminster, NJ.

Locations: Bedminster, NJ.

Names: Bush, George W.; Clinton, William J.; Haley, Nikki R.; Kim Jong Un; Mattis, James N.; McConnell, A. Mitchell; Obama, Barack; Tillerson, Rex W.

Subjects: China : Relations with North Korea; China : Trade with U.S.; Congress : Bipartisanship; Congress : Senate :: Majority leader; Defense, Department of : Secretary; Drug abuse and trafficking : Addiction treatment and reduction efforts; Health and medical care : Health insurance reforms; New Jersey : President's visits; North Korea : Ballistic missiles, testing and development; North Korea : International and U.S. sanctions; North Korea : International diplomatic efforts; North Korea : Korean Worker's Party Chairman; North Korea : Nuclear weapons development; North Korea : Relations with China; State, Department of : Secretary; Taxation : Tax Code, reform; Transportation : Infrastructure, national, improvement efforts; United Nations : U.S. Permanent Representative; Venezuela : Political unrest and violence.

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